current Modernising Medical Careers launched by UK Department of Health. The Department of Health has agreed to consider the request of keeping the first round open for Indian doctors. In the first round, NHS proposes to recruit around 10,000 doctors. Further efforts are on to ensure that IMGs are also allowed to appear unconditionally for the second round of recruitment that is likely to take place in April 2007.

Indian workers working abroad without registration

1097. SHRI TARINI KANTA ROY: Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of migrated Indian workers working overseas without registration with Protector General of Emigration; and

(b) whether Government would bring a comprehensive legislation to prosecute the agencies/agents engaged in illegal migration?

THE MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI): (a) About 6.77 lakh Indian workers have taken emigration clearance from the Protector of Emigrants (POEs) during 2006, to work abroad. No record is maintained of persons working abroad who do not require such clearance of POEs.

(b) The Emigration Act, 1983, contains provisions for action against agencies/agents engaged in illegal migration. In cases involving registered recruiting agents, action is taken to suspend/cancel their registration certificate. Similar cases involving un-registered agents are reported to the local police authorities for prosecution.

Harassment of NRIs in Britain

†1098. SHRI MAHENDRA SAHNI: Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that British Government are harassing Non-Resident Indians by bringing change in the Highly Skilled Migrant Programme (HSMP) rules;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) the steps being taken by Government to provide a better future and other facilities for Non-Resident Indians?

THE MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI): (a) The UK Home Office, in March 2006, presented to the Parliament the new immigration guidelines "A Point-based System: Making Migration Work for Britain" and announced its implementation from 7th November 2006. According to the new guidelines, for an extension of visa or for Indefinite Leave of Settlement, a person staying in the UK under Highly Skilled Migration Programme (HSMO) has to earn 75 points (in 2003 it was 65) on the basis of his age, earnings and UK experience.

The revised rules require the applicants to re-qualify through a stringent points based system for their further visa extension which is against the initial promises of extension of visas on economic activity alone when they entered into the UK. The new point based system also expects them to gain more points on higher salaries and on younger age.

The High Commission has taken up the matter with British Parliamentarians. It has been informed by the Govt, of UK that the point based system is designed to allow highly skilled people to migrate to the UK over long run. They have further informed that to those who are already in the UK, Government will be as helpful as possible. The High Commission has also brought to the notice of the Govt, of UK the necessity of not applying the amendments with retrospective effect and the need to have some policy for the transition period.

British immigration laws

1099. SHRI MAHENDRA MOHAN:
SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH:
SHRI SYED AZEEZ PASHA:

Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that due to stringent immigration laws recently enforced by the British Government, Indian professionals are going to be hit hard and they have to return in the middle of their contract;

(b) if so, whether Government have taken up the matter with the British Government in this regard and the outcome thereof;